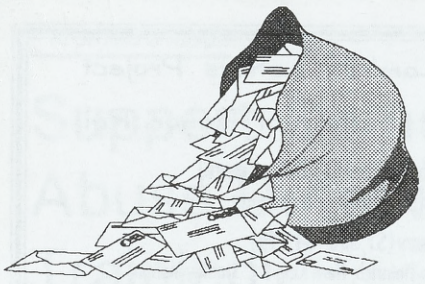

Lambda Letters Project

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Vol. 11, No. 3 March, 2003 www.lambdaletters.org LambdaLP@aol.com (916) 728-1261

New Board Members Join Lambda Letters

by Lori Norman, LLP Board Chair

I am happy to announce that the Lambda Letters Project added six new members to the board of directors at the Project's annual meeting in San Diego on January 22. The additions to the board include two lawyers, two government employees, and one lobbyist. Two are women and one is a person of color. One has a Ph.D. in communications and teaches classes in that subject. These new members will provide a major boost to the work of Lambda Letters by providing publicity, fundraising, and other functions that are needed to support the lobbying work of the Project.

These new board members were recruited at a special presentation made on January 9. Fred Palmer of *OutWord Magazine* worked hard to help make that event a success. We also owe a debt of gratitude to Mark Whisler and Dennis Mangers for the part they played in the success of the event.

Please note that Lambda Letters still needs more board members. If you or someone you know would like to join our board, or if you want more information about it, please send us a note with your signed letters. Or you can call me at (818) 785-1563 or e-mail me at bettyboop_1930@hotmail.com. ###

'Intersex' Added to LLP Mission Statement

by Lori Norman, LLP Board Chair

At Lambda Letters' annual board meeting in San Diego on January 22, two-thirds of LLP members voted to add the term "intersex" to the list of communities included in the Project's mission statement.

Simply put, intersexuality is a set of medical conditions that features "congenital anomaly of the reproductive and sexual system."

That is, a person with an intersex condition is born with sex chromosomes, external genitalia, or an internal reproductive system that is not considered "standard" for either male or female. The total number of people whose bodies differ from standard male or female total 1 percent of births. (Source: *American Journal of Human Biology,* 12:151–166.)

Since the 1950s, babies born with external genitalia that were outside of society's expectations have been routinely surgically altered. The purpose of these procedures has been to "normalize" these babies' exterior appearance.

"The Constitutional Court of Colombia noted that this is not a medical decision but a judicial and ethical decision..." (Source: *www.isna.org/colombia/pr.html.*)

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Lambda Letters Progress Report

Letters & Messages Collected
January, 2003 16,549 letters & e-mails

Dollars Spent
January, 2003 $5,056

Can You Help?
Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

Lambda Letters Project

Mission Statement

To promote people of color, feminist, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and HIV/AIDS status advocacy; and to bring people of color, women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgendered and intersex persons, and persons affected by or living with HIV/AIDS into full participation in American society.

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Publication of the name of any person or organization in articles or advertising in the Lambda Letters Project newsletter is not to be construed as any indication of the sexual orientation of such person or organization. The Lambda Letters Project does not sell or loan its mailing list to anyone. We give no information about who is, or is not, a member of the Project. We do, occasionally, send mailings on behalf of other worthwhile organizations, but this is done by our own volunteers so that no other organization has the opportunity to copy our mailing lists.

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Business-card sized ads (3½"×2") $10, quarter-page ads $30, third-page ads $33, half-page ads $45, full-page ads $75, full back-page ad $100. Deadline for payment and camera-ready copy, along with your name and phone number, is the 25th of each month.

☐ Yes, I want to make a donation to help LLP continue its important work.
(Appreciated but not required.)
☐ $10 ☐ $20 ☐ $30 ☐ other $_____

Discrimination Complaints

Have you experienced employment discrimination because of your actual or perceived sexual orientation or because of your age (40 and over), ancestry, color, creed, disability, marital status, medical condition, national origin, race, religion, or sex? Have you been denied family and medical care leave or pregnancy disability leave?
If so, you may register a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing. In cases of employment discrimination, call the department at (800) 884-1684. In cases of housing discrimination, call (800) 233-3212.
The person answering the phone will schedule an appointment for you at the Department of Fair Employment and Housing Office which is closest to your home or place of employment.

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Women's Issue

Support Domestic Abuse Detection Training

by Boyce Hinman

Domestic violence is a very serious, and common, crime in California. It is also a crime that many victims feel ashamed of or afraid to report. AB 145, by Alan Lowenthal (D–Long Beach), provides a way to increase the detection of domestic violence and allow something to be done about it, by requiring county probation officers to undergo training in the detection of and response to domestic violence.

AB 145 was due to be voted on in the Assembly Public Safety Committee on February 25, after this newsletter's due date but before you receive this mailing. However, we believe this bill will be approved by that committee, so we are asking you to write to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, where we hope it will go next.

Forcible rape is only one of many kinds of domestic abuse that occur in California every day. Yet the toll of just this one sort of violence is appalling. According to the California Department of Justice, there were 9,785 rapes reported in California in 2000, the latest year for which statistics are available. The number of rapes per year has been at that level or above for the past several years. However, it is almost certain that the actual incidence is much higher. And rape is just one form of domestic abuse.

The problem is so bad that the attorney general, in his Report on Violence Prevention, recommended requiring domestic abuse training of all criminal justice personnel to help them detect and respond to domestic abuse.

Towards that end, recent legislation passed in prior years has mandated domestic violence education for judges and district attorneys. This training has helped them understand better the complexity of issues related to domestic violence.

Unfortunately, probation officers, who have the most regular contact with batterers and their victims, are not required to take this training. AB 145 aims to solve that problem. It would require that probation officers receive three hours of domestic violence training as part of their initial training, and continue receiving domestic violence training of no less than three hours every two years.

This training is important not only for the reasons already stated but also because probation officers frequently participate in designing the probation rules imposed by the courts on convicted domestic abusers.

AB 145 is a good bill. Please sign the sample letter addressed to members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee enclosed with this newsletter and urge them to vote for AB 145. ###

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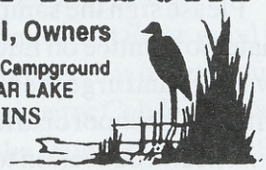

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People of Color Issue

Remarks Taint Homeland Security Chairman

by Marty Martinez

On February 4 the Associated Press reported that Representative Howard Coble (R–NC) said he supported the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II.

This comment would be outrageous enough, but Coble also chairs an important committee on homeland security. Because his position carries added importance in today's political climate, it is unacceptable for such a person, so blind to history, to steer Congress in its debates about homeland security.

We urge you to tell your representatives to remove him from this position immediately.

President Roosevelt's decision to incarcerate the Japanese-American community during World War II is generally recognized as one of the darker moments of American history. According to news accounts,

Continued on page 5

HIV/AIDS Issue

Support Sexual Health Education in Schools

by Jamie Shauvin

This month we hope you will write to the members of the California Senate Committee on Education and ask for their approval of SB 71, the California Comprehensive Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Prevention Education Act.

Introduced by Sheila Kuehl (D–Los Angeles) in January, this bill would authorize California's school districts to provide comprehensive sex health education to students in kindergarten and grades 1 through 12. It would also require all students in grades 7 through 12 to receive HIV/AIDS prevention education. SB 71 is currently in the process of being sent to the Senate Committee on Education for their review and approval in late March or early April.

Currently, California's sex education laws are a mind-boggling maze that often don't provide school districts with a clearly defined framework to follow when providing students with information on preventing sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and unintended pregnancies, and developing a healthy attitude toward their sexuality. SB 71 would provide schools with improved guidelines regarding sex education and ensure that sex education in California's public schools is free of bias, medically accurate, and comprehensive. The public wants comprehensive sex education; polls have found that as many as 85 percent of Californians favor comprehensive sex education for their children.

More specifically, SB 71 would replace 11 existing laws scattered throughout the education code that relate to sex education with just one new section for sex education and HIV/AIDS. SB 71 would respect the rights of parents who want to exclude their children from education about sex and HIV/AIDS.

Educators would be required to be knowledgeable about the most recent research on sexuality, pregnancy, and STDs; and their instruction would have to be medically accurate and age-appropriate. SB 71 would require that sex education stress the values of abstinence while not ignoring those students who have been, or are, sexually active. SB 71 would ensure that sex education is bilingual, culturally sensitive, and free from bias.

Please sign the sample letter to the California Senate Committee on Education included with this newsletter and urge them to approve SB 71 authorizing California's school districts to provide comprehensive sexual health education to students in kindergarten and grades 1 through 12, as well as HIV/AIDS prevention education to all students in grades 7 through 12. ###

LGBTI Issue

Support Transgenders

by Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

On January 27 Mark Leno (D–San Francisco) introduced AB 196, a bill to ban discrimination against transgendered people. The bill has been referred to the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee for their approval. This month we are asking you to write to the members of that committee urging them to approve the bill.

This is the third attempt to get a transgender nondiscrimination bill passed. In 2000 Fred Keeley (D–Santa Cruz) introduced AB 2142. In 2001 Jackie Goldberg (D–Los Angeles) introduced AB 1649. Both bills were cosponsored by Lambda Letters and both would have prohibited discrimination against transgendered people.

Both bills were approved in the Assembly but they stumbled in the Senate. AB 2142 died in the Senate Judiciary Committee when then-Senator Adam Schiff (D–Pasadena) refused to vote for it because he was running for Congress. (He now represents California's 29th District in the House of Representatives.) AB 1649 died when Goldberg dropped it because Governor Davis promised to carry out the intent of the bill through administrative action. That has not happened. Prior to AB 1649 being dropped, the bill had not lost a single vote in the legislature.

Lesbians and gays now have laws that legalize gay and lesbian sex. California law bans discrimination against them and their domestic partnerships are officially recognized by the state. California law now provides a number of marriage-like benefits to domestic partners. Transgendered people have none of these recognitions and benefits. Their turn is long overdue.

Please sign the sample letter to the members of the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee enclosed with this newsletter and urge them to support AB 196 when it comes before the committee. ###

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Hinman Celebrates 15th LLP Anniversary

by Lori Norman, LLP Board Chair

Thank you for choosing to work with the Lambda Letters Project in molding this world into a better place to live. With your help we will construct a California in which all people are treated with respect and all have access to affordable healthcare.

This year is special to us as we celebrate Boyce Hinman's 15th anniversary as founder and chief lobbyist of the Lambda Letters Project.

Under Boyce's leadership, Lambda Letters has become a powerful voice for justice in California. The Project has created a unique way to combine the voices of thousands of ordinary people in a way that elected officials cannot ignore.

For example, last year people just like you—members of Lambda Letters—sent almost 218,000 letters and messages to our elected officials. One person's voice may seem but a whisper but the words of so many, spoken in unison, are like the roar of the lion.

This year we continue the adventure. Several blockbuster civil rights and health bills are being introduced in the state legislature. For example, Assemblymember Christine Kehoe (D–San Diego) has introduced AB 17, a bill that would require all businesses that contract with the state to provide the same benefits to the domestic partners of their employees as they offer to the spouses of their employees.

Senator Tom Torlakson (D–Walnut Creek) has introduced SB 85, which would allow all California counties to offer death benefits, retirement allowances, and survivor's benefits to the domestic partners of their employees and retirees.

Assemblymember Mark Leno (D–San Francisco) has introduced AB 196, a bill aimed at banning discrimination against transgendered people.

Last but not least, Senator Sheila Kuehl (D–Los Angeles) is planning to introduce a universal healthcare bill. (There is no number for her bill yet.)

There is absolutely no doubt that these good bills will be opposed with all the power that our opponents can muster. In fact the Campaign for California Families—a group that believes "the foundation of civilization is the family, defined as related by birth, heterosexual marriage or adoption"—has already mounted an attack on the first three bills mentioned above. (Their website urges members to "send legislators and Gov. Davis an e-mail message opposing the 'LGBT' bills harming marriage, family and religious freedom.")

Please help us respond to these attacks with the most effective campaign possible in support of these and other key bills. Please help us make these last 15 years just the first 15 years of effective service to the community.

Help us celebrate Boyce's years of service with a generous donation to the Lambda Letters Project.

On page 2 of this newsletter, you will find a list of suggested levels of giving. We hope to add your name to that list of illustrious supporters in our next newsletter in April.

###

People of Color Issue

Continued from page 3

Coble's comments were made on a radio call-in program on WKZL-FM in North Carolina.

In response to a suggestion that Arab-Americans be similarly incarcerated, Coble disagreed that the Arab-American community should be interned but asserted that, while the internment of Japanese-Americans was for their own protection, "Some probably were intent on doing harm to us, just as some of these Arab-Americans are probably intent on doing harm to us."

For related news articles, check out our website at *www.lambdaletters.org/poc.html.*

The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), the nation's oldest and largest Asian Pacific–American civil rights organization, and other advocates for communities of color have joined to call for the removal of Coble from his position as chair of the House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security.

As evidenced when Senator Trent Lott was forced to resign as Senate Majority Leader as a result of comments he made that suggested he supported Strom Thurmond's segregationist presidential campaign in the 1940s, it is possible to remove an important person from an important post because of his blindness to history and racial justice.

Please sign the sample letter on this topic and return it to LLP as soon as possible.

###

March Legislative Update

All bills for consideration in 2003 had to be introduced by no later than February 21. This means no new bills can be introduced until 2004. However, if a legislator has an important new issue that needs to be addressed immediately by the state legislature, the legislator can gut one of his or her own bills and substitute it with entirely new language. This rarely happens, however.

Most bills have to be approved by a policy committee in each house. Bills that would cost the government $100,000 or more must also be approved by the Appropriations Committee in each house. These votes must occur before a bill can be voted on by the full Senate or Assembly.

Here are the bills we are tracking at this point.

HIV/AIDS Issues

AB 4 (Wilma Chan, D–Oakland)
Purpose: To increase personal income tax rates, beyond the present maximum of 9.3 percent, for that portion of the taxable income of an individual exceeding $130,000 and for that portion of taxable income of married taxpayers filing jointly exceeding $260,000.
Status: Introduced.
LLP Position: Support. This will reduce the pressure to cut important health programs.

SB 71 (Sheila Kuehl, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: Among other things, to authorize school districts to provide comprehensive sexual health education, as defined, in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, and would require school districts to ensure that all pupils in grades 7 to 12, inclusive, receive HIV/AIDS prevention education.
Status: Referred to the Senate Education Committee for a hearing in late March or early April.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 131 (Byron Sher, D–Redwood City)
Purpose: To change first time possession of a small amount of marijuana from a misdemeanor to an infraction with a lesser penalty.
Status: Referred to Senate Public Safety Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Neutral. The bill seems to increase the number of times a person must actually be booked at a police station for marijuana possession.

SB 151 (John Burton, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To eliminate the extra paper work required of doctors when prescribing a Schedule II controlled substance. These are mostly potent pain medications.
Status: Introduced. Not assigned to a committee yet.
LLP Position: Support. The bill should reduce the barriers to providing adequate pain management to patients.

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/ Intersex Issues

AB 17 (Christine Kehoe, D–San Diego)
Purpose: To prohibit a state agency from entering into a contract for the acquisition of goods or services with a vendor or contractor who does not offer benefits to domestic partner employees, as defined, that are equal to benefits offered to employees with spouses, except as otherwise specified.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Judiciary Committee for a hearing on March 4.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 18 (Mark Leno, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To provide that nothing in California's Fair Employment and Housing Act shall be construed to prohibit a city, county, or other political subdivision of the state from providing or maintaining greater protections against discrimination than those provided by the act. This might allow cities and counties to specifically ban discrimination against transgendered people.

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Status: Referred to the Assembly Judiciary Committee for a hearing on March 18.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 75 (Gloria Negrete McLeod, D–Montclair)
Purpose: To authorize agencies contracting with California's Public Employee Retirement System to provide the survivors of a deceased, retired local firefighter an allowance equal to 40 percent of a specified portion of the deceased member's retirement allowance plus 75 percent of the remaining portion of the deceased member's allowance.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Public Employees, Retirement, and Social Security Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support if domestic partners are added to the list of eligible survivors.

AB 76 (Ellen Corbett, D–San Leandro)
Purpose: To make it unlawful for an employer to fail to take immediate and appropriate corrective action to prevent harassment of an employee by any person, once the employer knows or should have known of this conduct.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Judiciary Committee for a hearing on March 4.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 196 (Mark Leno, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To ban discrimination against transgendered people.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 205 (Jackie Goldberg, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To extend the rights and responsibilities of marriage to registered domestic partners. Would also revise the process for registering as domestic partners.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Judiciary Committee for a hearing on March 4.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 266 (Gene Mullin, D–San Mateo)
Purpose: To authorize the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors to elect to phase-in domestic partner benefits to the partners of county employees and retirees, through collective bargaining and based on actuarial cost estimates.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Public Employees, Retirement, and Social Security Committee, No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support. Authority for San Mateo County to offer domestic partner benefits was granted in legislation two years ago.

SB 85 (Tom Torlakson, D–Walnut Creek)
Purpose: To allow any county to offer the same death benefits, optional retirement allowances, or survivor's allowances to a registered domestic partner of a county employee or retiree that are currently offered to a spouse of a county employee or retiree. However, for the domestic partner to qualify for the benefits, an affidavit of domestic partnership must be on file with the county one year prior to the employee's retirement or death prior to retirement.

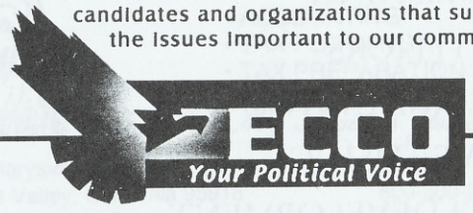
Continued on page 8

ECCO is pleased to support the Lambda Letters Project.

ECCO is proud to be a part of the activist LGBT community. When we work together, we can accomplish anything.

The Elections Committee of the County of Orange (ECCO) is a non-partisan Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, HIV/AIDS, and Women's political action committee serving Orange County and Long Beach, California.

Join us as we financially assist local, state, and federal candidates and organizations that support the issues important to our community.



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Continued from page 7

Status: Referred to the Public Employment and Retirement Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

People of Color Issues

AB 30 (Keith Richman, R–Granada Hills)
Purpose: To require the state to expand the Healthy Families Program to provide health insurance coverage to employed, childless adults who are uninsured for healthcare coverage and who meet certain household income requirements, subject to approval of a federal waiver and appropriation of state matching funds.
Status: Referred to Assembly Health Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 54 (Jenny Oropeza, D–Carson)
Purpose: To require the California Research Bureau, in consultation with the State Department of Education, to contract with an independent evaluator to conduct a study of the availability and effectiveness of cross-cultural training for public school teachers and administrators. The bill would require the study to focus on ten culturally diverse schools that reflect the diverse demography and geography of California and would prescribe criteria for selecting those schools.
Status: Referred to Assembly Education Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 174 (Thomas Calderon, D–Montebello)
Purpose: To help mitigate the effect of increases in community college fees. Governor Davis has proposed more than doubling the fee per unit of credit for community colleges. This bill states that if community college fees are increased, only the first ten units will be payable at the new rates; additional credits will be free.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Committee on Higher Education. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support. People on limited income depend on low-cost community colleges to receive their college education, which increases their chance of getting good-paying jobs.

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AB 177 (Jenny Oropeza, D–Carson)
Purpose: To require that voters pamphlets include a statement setting forth various specified rights of voters during an election. The Secretary of State would be required to print posters, in English and Spanish, setting forth the list of rights and to distribute the posters to county elections officials for display by precinct officials at their polling places.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Elections, Reapportionment, and Constitutional Amendments Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support but would like other minority languages added to the bill.

AB 203 (Sally Lieber, D–San Jose)
Purpose: To require the state to conduct an annual study of physician reimbursement rates in medical assistance programs in five states comparable to California and to submit an annual report to the appropriate committees of the legislature on the study. The concept is to see if we should adjust the rates paid to doctors for caring for Medi-Cal patients.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Health Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 227 (Juan Vargas, D–National City)
Purpose: To prohibit an insurer from using credit ratings, credit reports, credit scoring models, or credit information to underwrite, classify, or rate certain automobile and property insurance policies. The bill would also prohibit an insurer from refusing to issue those policies, and from non-renewing or canceling those policies, based upon credit grounds.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Insurance Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 231 (Darrel Steinberg, D–Sacramento)
Purpose: To help people qualify for the CalWorks and Food Stamp Programs, which serve limited-income people in California. Because their assets are reviewed to see whether they qualify for the programs, this bill states that a car owned by someone should not be considered when determining whether that person has few-enough assets to qualify for the programs.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Human Services Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 292 (Leland Yee, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To provide that a state or local governmental agency, or a public or private agency supported by state funding, shall not use any child, or permit any child to be used, as a translator or interpreter in any matter involving the business or function of that agency except as specified, and would require each agency that receives state funding to have available for inspection an established procedure for translation services that does not involve the use of children.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Business and Professions Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

ACR 14 (George Nakano, D–Torrance)
Purpose: To declare February 19, 2003, as a Day of Remembrance in order to increase public awareness of the events surrounding the internment of Americans of Japanese ancestry during World War II.
Status: Ready for a final vote on the floor of the Assembly.
LLP Position: Support.

AJR 3 (Jerome Horton, D–Inglewood)
Purpose: To urge the Congress and the President of the United States to repeal a provision of the 1998

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amendments to the federal Higher Education Act of 1965 that denies or delays access to financial aid based upon convictions for drug-related offenses.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Higher Education Committee: No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 4 (Dennis Hollingsworth, R–Riverside)
Purpose: Commencing with taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2003, to reduce all marginal tax rates, as provided, and to eliminate the tax on taxable income and the alternative minimum tax for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2007.
Status: Referred to Senate Revenue and Tax Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Oppose. These tax cuts are unreasonable when the state is considering massive cuts to education and health programs.

SB 17 (Martha Escutia, D–Norwalk)
Purpose: To amend the laws relating to property taxes on nonresidential commercial and industrial property to eliminate loopholes that have allowed such properties to evade reassessment upon sale of the property.
Status: Has not yet been assigned to a committee.
LLP Position: Support. This bill would increase tax revenues and reduce the need to cut spending on health and social services programs.

SB 24 (Liz Figueroa, D–Fremont)
Purpose: To require the Department of Health Services to make it easier for poor people to qualify for healthcare coverage by implementing a seamless, coordinated healthcare program. It would enable participating healthcare providers to screen and initiate an accelerated enrollment process for eligible individuals into the Medi-Cal program or the Healthy Families Program at the time medical care is provided. The bill would require the department to exercise its option under federal law and submit the necessary federal waiver to allow providers to engage in this process.
Status: Referred to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee for a hearing on March 12.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 36 (Wes Chesbro, D–Santa Rosa)
Purpose: To provide that federally qualified health center services and rural health clinic services, as defined, are covered benefits under the Medi-Cal program, to be reimbursed to providers on a per-visit basis. The bill would also provide for various requirements pertaining to the reimbursement of these services.
Status: Referred to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee for a hearing on March 12.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 43 (Gil Cedillo, D–Los Angeles)
Purpose: To provide an easy way for people to contribute to the Emergency Food Assistance Program Fund by submitting extra money with taxes owed to the state each year. The bill would permit this until January 1, 2009.
Status: Introduced.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 57 (John Burton, D–San Francisco)
Purpose: To adjust the hourly minimum wage on January 1, 2004, and annually thereafter, to maintain employee purchasing power.
Status: Referred to the Senate Labor and Industrial Relations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 101 (Wes Chesbro, D–Santa Rosa)
Purpose: To require most healthcare service plans and disability insurance policies to provide coverage for the treatment of medically necessary substance-related disorders, excluding caffeine-related disorders, on the same basis as they provide coverage for any other medical condition.
Status: Referred to the Senate Insurance Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

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SB 142 (Dierdre Alpert, D–San Diego)
Purpose: To require the state to establish a process for county Medi-Cal eligibility staff members to authorize eligibility for children in the Healthy Families Program if the child meets the program's eligibility requirements. Currently county Medi-Cal staff are not doing this.
Status: Referred to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee for a hearing on March 12.
LLP Position: Support. This bill would create an additional gate through which children could be enrolled in the Health Families Program.

SB 146 (Martha Escutia, D–Norwalk)
Purpose: To help non-English-speaking people understand business contracts they sign. Current law requires business people who negotiate certain contracts primarily in Spanish to deliver a Spanish language translation of the contract to other parties prior to execution of the contract. This bill adds that the Spanish language document must include a translation of every term and condition in that contract.
Status: Referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support but would like other languages added to the bill.

SB 148 (Tom Torlakson, D–Walnut Creek)
Purpose: To encourage the building of low-cost housing and an end to urban sprawl. Currently some of the property taxes on housing goes to the state and some to the counties. This bill states that if a county uses zoning laws to encourage the building of housing that can be served by existing infrastructure (sewers, electrical systems, and so on), *and* if the county invests in low-cost housing, the county can keep all the property taxes generated by that property.
Status: Introduced. Not referred to a committee yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SBX1 1 (Charles Poochigian, R–Fresno)
Purpose: To suspend all bills relating to workers' compensation, labor standards, and agricultural labor relations, that were approved last year, until the governor issues a proclamation declaring that the California economy has fully recovered from the recession that began in 2000.
Status: Referred to the Senate Labor and Industrial Relations Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Watch with concern. This may invalidate bills of concern to people of color.

SBX 1 3 (Martha Escutia, D–Norwalk)
Purpose: To amend the laws relating to property taxes on nonresidential commercial and industrial property to eliminate loopholes that have allowed such properties to evade reassessment upon sale of the property.
Status: Has not yet been assigned to a committee.
LLP Position: Support. This bill would increase tax revenues and reduce the need to cut spending on health and social services programs.

SJR 3 (Richard Alarcon, D–Van Nuys)
Purpose: To urge Congress to increase the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant funding to certain states; to allow states until January 1, 2005, to use TANF funds for eligible families who have used 60 months of TANF eligibility; and to consider "stopping the clock" on TANF assistance for recipients who are meeting work participation requirements or live in counties with high unemployment rates.
Status: Referred to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

Women's Issues

AB 23 (Joe Nation, D–San Rafael)
Purpose: To state the intent of the legislature to enact legislation that would require healthcare providers to accept and support specified rights of mammography patients, and that these patients accept specified responsibilities.

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Legislative Update

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Status: Referred to the Assembly Health Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 134 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: In certain circumstances, to increase the penalty for domestic violence if the accused had been convicted previously of domestic violence.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Public Safety Committee for a hearing on March 25.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 143 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To express the intent of the legislature to enact legislation to authorize a court to award temporary support to a person who is a victim of domestic violence prior to requiring that person to file for divorce, legal separation, or nullity of marriage and spousal, child, or family support.
Status: Introduced. Not referred to a committee yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 145 (Alan Lowenthal, D–Long Beach)
Purpose: To require probation officers to receive initial and refresher training in domestic violence.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Public Safety Committee for a hearing on February 25.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 183 (Joe Nation, D–San Rafael)
Purpose: To include licensed marriage and family therapist and licensed clinical social workers services within the scope of Medi-Cal covered benefits, to the extent that federal matching funds are available for those services.

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Status: Referred to Assembly Committee on Health. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 184 (Alan Lowenthal, D–Long Beach)
Purpose: To allow the drivers registration public records of the victims of domestic violence and stalking to be kept confidential.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Transportation Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

ACR 6 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To proclaim the month of October 2003 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
Status: Referred to Assembly Rules Committee. May not need hearings from policy or appropriations committees.
LLP Position: Support.

ACR 11 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)
Purpose: To proclaim October 8, 2003, as Health Cares About Domestic Violence Day.
Status: Referred to Assembly Rules Committee. May not need hearings from policy or appropriations committees.
LLP Position: Support.

AJR 2 (Hannah-Beth Jackson, D–Santa Barbara)
Purpose: To tell Congress and the President of the United States to stand firm in their resolve to uphold the intent and substance of the Supreme Court's decision in Roe *v.* Wade relating to reproductive rights, and to encourage all Americans to participate in the national celebration, "Celebrating 30 Years of Roe *v.* Wade," in recognition of that decision's historic importance in promoting women's rights.
Status: Approved by the Assembly. Sent to the Senate. Not assigned to a committee yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 52 (Dennis Hollingsworth, R–Temecula)
Purpose: To appropriate $15 million to county sheriffs for Sexual Assault Felony Enforcement (SAFE) Teams. The teams would concentrate on tracking sexually violent predators and protecting the welfare and safety of Californians.
Status: Referred to the Senate Public Safety Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support. ###

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'Intersex' Added to LLP Mission Statement

Continued from page 1

From the time they are young children, the shame and secrecy behind these surgeries has impacted their lives in many ways. These surgeries, also known as Intersex Genital Mutilation (IGM), have been widely practiced for over 40 years in most industrialized countries. In the U.S. experts estimate that at least five children are cut every day.

"Here in the U.S., doctors who perform IGM continue to reject the voices of those harmed by the surgery. Ethicists in the U.S. have uniformly denounced IGM as unethical, but until U.S. courts act, American doctors will continue to perform IGM on 2,000 children every year," noted Cheryl Chase of the Intersex Society of North America (ISNA). "Current laws do not protect us," she added.

The Constitutional Court of Colombia issued two decisions in 1999 (SU-337/99 and T-551/99) that significantly restrict the ability of parents and doctors to resort to the scalpel when children are born with atypical genitals.

In addition to the Colombian Constitution, the Constitutional Court of Colombia also based its holding on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

According to Shannon Minter, staff attorney for the National Center for Lesbian Rights, "the Court recognized that children are persons entitled to human rights, not simply the property of parents and/or the state. By holding that parents must place the well-being and best interests of their child above social prejudice, the Court affirmed the inherent dignity and worth of all children, including those who are gender-variant." The U.S. is not a signatory of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

"Intersexed people question our capacity for tolerance and constitute a challenge to the acceptance of difference. Public authorities, the medical community and the citizenry at large have a duty to open up a space for these people who have, until now, been silenced [...] We all have to listen to them, and not only to learn how to live with them but also to learn from them," stated the Court. (Source: *www.isna.org/colombia/pr.html.*)

LLP will work to create a world free of shame, secrecy, and genital mutilation for people born with atypical sex anatomy. For more information, visit the ISNA website at *www.isna.org.*

I would like to thank the Intersex Society of North America for its guidance in writing this article. ###

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